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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage December 4 on the 2008 legislative elections; on Eastern Multimedia Group Chairman Gary Wang, who is now in custody for embezzlement and whose funds were frozen by the Taipei District Prosecutor's Office Monday; and on the results of an Asian Baseball Championship game Monday. Both the pro-independence "Liberty Times" and the pro-unification "United Daily News" reported on AIT Director Stephen Young's speech delivered at a seminar hosted by the Foundation on International and Cross-Strait Studies Monday. The "Liberty Times" story ran with the headline "Stephen Young: UN Referendum Is Neither Necessary Nor Helpful," while the "United Daily News" story was headlined "Stephen Young: United States Hopes That [Taiwan's] New President Will [Resume] Dialogue with China."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a "Liberty Times" analysis discussed Young's remarks on Taiwan's UN referendum and said Washington has sensed that it can no longer stop the referendum and has thus started "damage control." A "United Daily News" editorial discussed cross-Strait relations and the UN referendum. The article urged Beijing to clarify and elaborate on its new cross-Strait discourse. End Summary.

A) "Unable to Stop the Referendum, the United States [Starts] Damage Control?"

Deputy Editor-in-Chief Tsou Jiing-wen noted in a news analysis in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] (12/4):

"AIT Director Stephen Young prepared a written speech draft before he delivered his remarks at the Foundation on International and Cross-Strait Studies Monday. Quite a few people present would surely find Young's remarks on the UN referenda, slated for March, 2008 very unpleasant. But a closer look into the logic behind Young's statement showed that the United States has sensed that the referenda can no longer be stopped and it has started the 'damage control' in advance.

"Between the two referenda on Taiwan's bid to 'join' and 're-join' the UN, the second one is a useless, bogus referendum that is meant to spoil the situation only; it has never been the real focus of this controversy. As for the really meaningful UN referendum [proposed by the DPP], it has always been the target of China's strong pressure, which was exerted via the United States both openly and under the table. But the DPP sent a total of 2.72 million of signatures it has collected for its referendum to the Central Election Commission on November 28, and the day was marked as a watershed, indicating that there is no turning back for the [UN] referendum ...

"Prior to November 28, the United States might still hope that Taiwan would apply the brakes on the UN referendum. But after that day, when such anticipation was gone, what faced [the United States] was how it would handle the situation carefully, particularly when

it involves Washington's own regional interests! Young did not mention any names [in his speech] yesterday, but indistinctly he seemed to be very stern with President Chen; those who are unaware of the situation might mistake him for the U.S. governor-general in Taiwan. Yet Young said he hopes that the new Taiwan president elected in 2008 will create a new situation via negotiation [with Beijing]. Young was non-committal, while at the same time he provided a vision for both sides of the Taiwan Strait; the significance that lies within his speech was quite thought-provoking. Young seemed to have bundled the UN referendum with one single person and then drawn a line between that person and Taiwan. Without a doubt, he was focusing all [the U.S.] complaints on one certain 'political figure.' The way he dealt with it was quite self-consoling, and yet it has left more room for maneuver for the United States, particularly when it comes to its future management of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. ..."

B) "How to Maintain the Status Quo for a Hundred Years? Beijing Should Make It Clear: Maintaining the Status Quo Is to Maintain the Republic of China"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (12/4):

"One of the main reasons why [people] can still manipulate the Taiwan independence issue is that the Beijing authorities have never been able to define precisely the 'Republic of China.' If Beijing fails to put the ROC in a proper perspective, leaving the Taiwan people to feel that the ROC is intolerable for Beijing, there will be room for manipulating Taiwan independence. The 'UN referendum' is an evident example. The psychological appeal behind the 'UN referendum' was actually not about advocating that 'Taiwan is able to join the UN.' On the contrary, it was meant to ridicule [the fact that] 'the ROC was kicked out of the UN.' All assertions regarding Taiwan independence are quite similar. Their key point was to highlight the negative effects of 'the ROC being bullied and

oppressed by China,' but they may not necessarily be able to point out the positive discourse or strategies about 'how the Republic of Taiwan is able to survive.' ...

"The Beijing authorities have adjusted their cross-Strait discourse over the past few years: First, to maintain the status quo naturally implies that they will 'accept the ROC.' Second, they no longer press for unification, meaning that they have accepted the status quo that 'both sides of the Taiwan Strait have yet to unify.' Third, the 'one China' [principle] has changed from the 'future tense' to 'present tense,' turning it into a theory that 'both mainland China and Taiwan belong to one China.' One can pretty much see a complete structure of 'one China with different interpretations' in this new cross-Strait discourse of Beijing. But the question is whether Beijing can further clarify the entire structure and spell things out more clearly. ..."

YOUNG